

Those of the ICCHRDD, Ms Suzanne Rumsey of the ICCHRLA, Mr. Chris Smart of IDR, Ms Frances Arbour, Mr. Al Hatton (NVO), Ms Sheila Katz (CLC), Ms Gabrielle Labelle (CUSO), Mr. Ken Trainor and Ms Michele Swenarchuk (CELA) all provided useful background. The author also wishes to thank Mr. Chris Pinney (CCP), Mr. John Clarke (World Bank), Mr. Tim Brodhead (McConnell Fdn.) and Mr. Andrew Reding (World Policy Institute) for their advice. The staff of the Mexican Centre for Philanthropy (CEMEFI), the Red de Derechos Humanos (Todos para Todos) and Congressional Staff member Andres Penalosa are also thanked for their assistance in arranging meetings.

Members of the staff of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and of the Canadian Embassy in Mexico were very helpful, including: Real Boivin, Alan Culham, Nick Cogle, Michael Small, Brian Stevenson and Claudia Vega. Mr. Douglas Williams of the Policy Division of CIDA also provided useful advice.

The Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies of the University of California provided a variety of supports and encouragements to this project and I wish to thank the Center and its Director, Prof. Kevin Middlebrook.

Limits and limitations

This paper is a survey based on an intense but brief period of investigation. It deals with an exploding universe of activity in a vast nation more than three times the population of Canada. Its findings are therefore initial, general and more tentative than might be the result of a more thorough study, such as the three-year effort being undertaken currently as part of the Johns Hopkins Institute of Policy Studies.

A note on some of the current studies of civil society under way in Mexico or by the aegis of multilateral bodies and foreign foundations is found in Appendix I.

The paper does not claim to represent the opinions or policy recommendations of Canadian civil society organizations or philanthropic bodies engaged with Mexico, although its findings might contribute or spark such a policy consensus.

The paper is written during a pre-electoral period of debate, change and unpredictability in Mexico. As the development of civil society in a process of democratization is politically conditioned, the conclusions should be reviewed in the light of the balance of forces and responses which emerge from the July 6 mid-term elections.

The author is prepared to comment on possible next steps, in the light of the findings and recommendations of the current essay.

The author is grateful for all the advice and assistance received, however, the conclusions and recommendations, the strengths and the weaknesses of the paper are his own.